

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 4420

LIMDIS

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SA, US, MASS, MARR

SUBJECT: SAUDI REQUESTS FOR NEW LOA'S (II)

REF: A. JIDDA 4367 B. JIDDA 4419

SUMMARY: PRINCE SULTAN REQUESTS LOA'S FOR SIGNIFICANT NEW ITEMS; REQUEST MAY PARTLY BE PUT FORWARD TO TEST US. RESPONSES, AND SULTAN IS IN A DEMANDING MOOD AFTER BEING EMBARRASSED BEFORE HIS MINISTRY BY NORTHROP REVELATIONS. WE RECOMMEND THAT OUR REPLY BE AS POSITIVE AS POSSIBLE BOTH IN ITS SUBSTANCE AND IN THE EVIDENT ATTENTION WE ACCORD IT. RECOMMEND THAT GENERAL AHMANN RETURN TO US WEEK OF MONDAY, JULY 7, TO DISCUSS SULTAN'S REQUESTS, AND PARTICIPATE IN A WASHINGTON REPLY. WE SHOULD SOFT PEDAL ANY ASPECTS OF A REPLY

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THAT WOULD APPEAR NEGATIVE OR ABRUPT, AND EMPHASIZE

IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING AS WELL AS EQUIPMENT IN CREATION OF MODERN ARMED FORCES. ACTION REQUESTED CONCURRENCE TO PROPOSALS PARA THREE BELOW. END SUMMARY.

1. THE MESSAGE WHICH PRINCE SULTAN GAVE TO AMBASSADOR AKINS IN PRINCE FAHD'S MEETING OF JUNE 15 (REF B) COMBINES SOME ISSUES THAT HAD BEEN RAISED AT VARIOUS TIMES DURING THE PAST YEAR; IT ALSO INCLUDED REQUESTS FOR NEW LOAS FOR MAJOR ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT.

2. WHAT WOULD EXPLAIN THE TIMING AND CONTENTS OF SULTAN'S LIST? IT WOULD BE NATURAL FOR SULTAN AND THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE TO GIVE THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR A LIST OF DRUTHERS JUST BEFORE HE GOES ON HOME LEAVE SO THAT THEY WILL BE SURE TO RECEIVE SPECIAL ATTENTION. THE PRESSURE IS KEPT ON. ON THE OTHER HAND, SULTAN'S DOCUMENT WAS UNCOORDINATED WITH USMTM. THE SAAF COULD NOT POSSIBLY MAN THIS AMOUNT OF EQUIPMENT WITHIN THE TIME FRAME REQUESTED. THERE IS, HOWEVER, A SEGMENT OF THE SAUDI MILITARY THAT DOES NOT SUPPORT THE PREFERENCE OF THE LATE KING FAISAL (AND CROWN PRINCE FAHD) FOR USE OF AMERICAN EQUIPMENT IN THE MODERNIZATON OF THE SAUDI ARMED FORCES. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THIS GROUP, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE EMBARRASSMENT AND ANGER WHICH FAHD AND SULTAN MUST FEEL AT THE NORTHROP REVELATIONS, HAVE SOLD THIS LIST TO THE PRINCE IN AN EFFORT TO DEMONSTRATE USG UNWILLINGNESS/INABILITY TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT NEAR-TERM DELIVERIES OF SOPHISTICATED, MODERN HARDWARD. FAHD'S SUSCEPTIBILITY TO SUCH A LINE IS ENHANCED MOREOVER BY THE LIMITED UNDERSTANDING HE SHOWED ABOUT THE RELATIVE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINED MANPOWER VERSUS SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT IN CONSTITUTING EFFECTIVE AND MODERN ARMED FORCES.

3. WE RECOMMEND RESPONDING TO THE SULTAN/FAHD APPROACH AS FOLLOWS: (A) THE EMBASSY SHOULD INFORM PRINCE SULTAN THAT CHUSMTM GENERAL AHMANN WILL SOON TRAVEL BACK TO THE UNITED STATES TO ASSIST WASHINGTON OFFICIALS IN THEIR REVIEW OF THE POINTS MADE IN SULTAN'S MESSAGE OF JUNE 15. GENERAL AHMAN PRIOR TO DEPARTING WOULD ASK PRINCE SULTAN TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON CERTAIN DESIRED QUANTITIES OF EQUIPMENT, (B) GEM. AHMANN WOULD TRAVEL TO WASH-CONFIDENTIAL

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INGTON FOR CONSULTATION DURING THE WEEK OF JULY 7 OR/ AMBASSADOR AKINS WILL BE IN WASHINGTON AT THE SAME TIME AND WE CAN LET SULTAN KNOWN THEY WILL BE WORKING TOGETHER TO SEE THAT MODA'S NEEDS RECEIVE THROUGH CONSIDERATION. SUCH AS REACTION TIME WOULD WE THINK BE SUFFICIENTLY FAST TO PERSUADE SULTAN SOMETHING IS BEING DONE. (C) A FORMAL REPLY SHOULD AFTERWARDS BE PREPARED IN WASHINGTON AND DELIVERED BY CHARGE' TO PRINCE SULTAN. A COPY WOULD ALSO BE GIVEN

TO PRINCE FAHD IN VIEW OF ATTENTION HE GAVE TO THIS TOPIC DURING HIS FAREWELL MEETING WITH AMBASSADOR. THE REPLY SHOULD OF COURSE EMPHASIZE THE POSITIVE. THERE MAY BE A NUMBER OF QUERIES TO WHICH WE CAN REPLY "YES", AND OTHERS TO WHICH WE CAN SEEM FORTHCOMING. WHEN THIS IS NOT POSSIBLE WE SHOULD GIVE A SOFT, OBLIQUE ANSWER SO AS NOT TO GIVE ANY CONFRONTATIONIST ELEMENTS IN MODA A PURCHASE. WE COULD FOR APPEARANCES' SAKE GIVE A RINGING "NO" TO SULTAN'S REQUEST FOR MINE-LAYING EQUIPMENT. IT WOULD SEEM MAHNNANIMOUS SPECIFICALLY TO RECOMMEND SOME COMPLICATED FOREIGN MACHINE (WHICH WILL BREAK DOWN ALMOST IMMEDIATELY UPON DELIVERY).

4. IN GENERAL, WE THINK IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE TONE OF OUR REPLY BE PATIENT AND FORTHCOMING. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD BY A HIGH MINISTERIAL SOURCE THAT THE NORTHROP REVELATIONS HAVE HURT SULTAN WITHIN HIS MINISTRY AND WITHIN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS; IT IS TO BE EXPECTED THAT HE WILL BE TESTY AND AGGRESSIVE FOR A WHILE TO COME. NO DOUBT HE IS ENCOURAGED IN SUCH AN ATTITUDE BY HIS CSAF GEN. ASAD ZUHAIR. SOME HOPEFULLY SIGNIFICANT COMMITMENTS AND A FORTHCOMING MANNER IN THE REPLY TO THIS REQUEST COULD PERHAPS SEE OUR RELATIONS BACK ON AN EVEN KEEL.

5. OBVIOUSLY, OUR DELIVERY TIMES FOR SUCH ITEMS AS THE M60 TANKS AND THE M113A1 ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS WILL CERTAINLY NOT BE WHAT THE SAG WANTS BUT IN POINTING HOW THE LEAD TIME FOR SUCH ITEMS WAS UNTIL RECENTLY 65 AND 72 MONTHS RESPECTIVELY, WE COULD SHOW WE HAVE MADE A SERIOUS EFFORT TO MEET THE SAUDIS PART WAY. HOW WELL SUCH AN APPROACH WORKS WILL OF COURSE DEPEND IN PART ON WHETHER OR NOT SULTAN/FAHD RECEIVE ANY MORE BAD NEWS AS THE CHURCH COMMITTEE LOOKS INTO RAYTHEON AND LOCKHEED.
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6. ONE IMPORTANT ITEM THAT SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN A REPLY TO PRINCE SULTAN WOULD BE REITERATED EMPHASIS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING EXISTING UNITS. THE AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH FAHD AND SULTAN HAD BEEN EXPRESSLY ESTABLISHED TO DISCUSS THE NEED FOR THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE TO PUT INCREASED EMPHASIS ON OPERATIONAL TRAINING OF SAAF USING EQUIPMENT ON HAND. THIS WAS AN APPROACH THAT GEN. AHMANN HAD EARLIER MADE DIRECTLY TO SULTAN WITH THE AMBASSADOR'S ENCOURAGEMENT AND CONCURRENCE. THE AMBASSADOR HIMSELF MADE A SMILIAR POINT TO SULTAN ON JUNE 15. SULTAN'S REACTION TO THESE APPROACHES HAD BEEN FAVORABLE, AND INCLUDED HIS ESTABLISHMENT OF A HIGH LEVEL MODA COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER IMPLEMENTAING TRAININGGRECOMMENDATIONS. THE EMBASSY AND USMTM BELIEVE

THAT THESE NEW TRAINING INITIATIVES WILL BE ACTED UPON BY MODA. HOWEVER AFTER HEARING FAHD'S COMMENTS OF JJNE 15 AND RECEIVING SULTAN'S LATEST BATCH OF REQUESTS, IT SEEMS POSSIBLE THAT THE SAG IS MORE INTERESTED IN THE ACQUISITION OF SOPHISTICATED EQUIPMENT THAN IN SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT OF ITS ARMED FORCES BY THE TRAINING ROUTE.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: APPROVAL TO THE PROPOSALS MENTIONED PARA 3.
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